CLAIMS

1. A method of mapping a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) string comprising:

searching for a particular pattern in an input URL string, the pattern being defined in a manner that permits the search to be satisfied while allowing variability among constituent parts of the input URL string; and

replacing the input URL string with an output URL string if the pattern is found in the input URL string.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the particular pattern comprises a regular expression.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of searching comprises:

accessing a plurality of input expressions, each of which describes a different pattern, wherein the input expressions are each associated with an output expression; and

checking the input URL string against the input expressions to determine a matching input expression.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said replacing comprises:

generating an output URL string from the output expression associated with the matching input expression.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said searching comprises:

accessing a plurality of input expressions, each of which describes a different pattern, wherein the input expressions are each associated with an output expression;

checking the input URL string against the input expressions to determine a matching input expression; and

wherein said replacing comprises generating an output URL string from the output expression associated with the matching input expression.

6. A Uniform Resource Locator (URL) mapping engine comprising an Application Programming Interface (API) that exposes a plurality of methods that are associated with managing rules that govern mapping capabilities of the URL mapping engine.

7. A method of mapping a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) string comprising:

receiving an input URL string;

mapping the input URL string to an output expression having a tagged expression therein; and

using the tagged expression to provide an output URL string.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the act of using comprises:

invoking a lookup procedure specified by the tagged expression to produce a result; and

using the result to generate the output URL string.

9. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing acts comprising:

receiving an input Uniform Resource Locator (URL) string;

evaluating the input URL string against a plurality of rules to identify a rule specifying a text pattern corresponding to the URL string, each rule having an output expression associated therewith, at least one rules specifying a text pattern correspond to more than one combination of text characters; and

producing an output URL string using an output expression associated with the identified rule.

10. A computer-readable medium as defined in claim 9, wherein each rule includes a rule ID and a rule action type.

12. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing acts comprising:

defining a plurality of rules, wherein each rule specifies:

a text pattern;

a rule ID;

a rule action type; and

a corresponding output expression;

wherein at least some of the text patterns correspond to more than one combination of text characters;

evaluating the rules against a URL string to identify a rule specifying a text pattern corresponding to the URL string; and

replacing the URL string with an output string specified by the output expression of the identified rule.